

Message Text

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TAGS: MASS, MILI TW US

SUBJCT: EA/ROC COUNTRY DIRECTOR CALL ON CHIEF OF

GENERAL STAFF

1. FOLLOWING ACCOUNT OF LEVIN-LAI CONVERSATION HAS NOT BEEN
CLEARED BY MR. LEVIN.

2. AT THE REQUEST OF GENERAL LAI MING-TANG, CHIEF OF THE
GENERAL STAFF, MR. LEVIN MADE A LAST MINUTE CALL JULY 28
IMMEDIATELY PRIOR TO HIS DEPARTURE. DURING THE BRIEF VISIT
GENERAL LAI MADE THE FOLLOWING POINTS:

3. HE EXPRESSED THE HOPE THAT THE UNITED STATES WOULD
ALLOW TAIWAN TO MAINTAIN A MILITARY DETERRENT WHICH WOULD
BE CREDIBLE TO THE PRC. HE HOPED THE US WOULD CONTINUE
TO SELL WEAPONS AND EXTEND CREDIT TO THE GROC. TAIWAN'S
ONLY USE OF THESE WEAPONS WOULD BE FOR DEFENSE PURPOSES.
THE GROC FULLY UNDERSTOOD THE FUTILITY OF INITIATING MILITARY
ACTION IN THE AREA. ITS CONCERN IS SOLELY WITH ITS OWN
SURVIVAL.

4. SPEAKING IN THE CONTEXT OF A CREDIBLE MILITARY DETERRENT,
GENERAL LAI BROUGHT UP THE HARPOON WHICH HE TERMED AS A
STRICTLY DEFENSIVE WEAPON. HE THEN NOTED THE GROWING
OBSOLESCENCE OF THE F-100'S AND F-104'S AND SAID EVEN THE
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F-5A'S WERE GETTING OLD. HE SAID THE GROC WAS THINKING

ABOUT THE NEED FOR A SMALL NUMBER OF F-16'S -- PERHAPS A SQUADRON. THEY WOULD BE EXPENSIVE, BUT IT WAS A PRICE TO BE PAID FOR SURVIVAL.

5. MR. LEVIN REPLIED THAT US POLICY ON THE SETTLEMENT OF THE TAIWAN ISSUE WAS STATED IN THE SHANGHAI COMMUNIQUE. THE COMMUNIQUE CALLS FOR THE PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT OF THE ISSUE. IN PRINCIPLE WE CAN APPRECIATE THE SIGNIFICANCE TO TAIWAN OF A CREDIBLE DETERRENT. HOWEVER, IN THE CASE OF PARTICULAR WEAPON SYSTEMS THERE WOULD BE SOME SENSITIVITIES INVOLVED OF WHICH LAI WAS UNDOUBTEDLY AWARE. IN CERTAIN CASES WE MAY HAVE A DIFFERENCE OF OPINION. MR. LEVIN NOTED THAT HARPOON IS STILL UNDER STUDY AND SAID HE APPRECIATED HEARING GENERAL LAI'S VIEWS ON THE NEED FOR THE F-16.

6. MR. LEVIN THEN RAISED THE NEWS REPORTS IN THE JULY 27 PRESS CONCERNING THE JOINT SINO-AMERICAN SHARK HUNG EXERCISE. HE SAID, SPEAKING PERSONALLY, AND AS AN OLD FRIEND, THAT SUCH STORIES WERE UNHELPFUL AND THAT CALLING ATTENTION TO THE EXERCISES SERIOUSLY ENDANGERED THEIR CONTINUATION.

7. GENERAL LAI SAID HE WAS VERY SENSITIVE TO THE PROBLEM AND IN THIS INSTANCE IT WAS NOT THE CHINESE SIDE WHICH HAD GONE AHEAD TO PUBLICIZE THE MATTER. A FOREIGN CORRESPONDENT HAD HEARD ABOUT THE EXERCISE AND ASKED THE MINISTRY OF NATIONAL DEFENSE (MND) SPOKESMAN FOR MORE INFORMATION. WHEN THE MND SPOKESMAN SOUGHT GUIDANCE FROM GENERAL LAI, HE TOLD THE SPOKESMAN TO CONTACT THE TDC PAO: IF THE AMERICANS HAD NO OBJECTIONS IT WOULD BE ALL RIGHT WITH MND. LAI WAS LATER ADVISED THAT TDC PAO HAD NOT OBJECTED.

8. MR. LEVIN AGAIN NOTED THE GREAT SENSITIVITIES ON PUBLICITY. GENERAL LAI SAID HE UNDERSTOOD FULLY AND WOULD SEE TO IT THAT IF THE US DID NOT WANT SUCH ACTIVITIES PUBLICIZED, THEY WOULD NOT BE PUBLICIZED.

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